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knew but little of Socrates, but was tempted by the salient points of his ludicrous exterior, to bring him, with all the ingenuity of the richest comic genius the world has ever seen, upon the Athenian stage for the entertainment of an audience, who, so that they were amused, cared for little else. With these preliminary "monitions to the reader," we commend the passage to which we refer, as a pleasant piece of whimsical exaggeration.

Compare either of the Gospels with the Life of Mahomet, as it is candidly set forth by Washington Irving, and good taste, if not religious sensibility, should prevent a writer from putting the two names together. There are some, however, who are foolish enough to think that such outrages are proof of independence, and who see nothing in the alliteration of "Jesus or Judas" but a fine illustration of superiority to the prejudices of the world around them.

We have merely touched upon a striking peculiarity of Mr. Emerson, in a religious point of view — his apparent indifference to positive religious belief, as shown by his manner of classing all beliefs together. When Christ and Socrates are spoken of in the same breath, we wonder that the military exploits, the exclusive love of Athens, the neglect of domestic duties, the humor, the drollery, and the drinking bouts of the latter do not rise in strange contrast with the universality that embraced Jew and Gentile alike in the arms of divine love, the sad and gentle earnestness to which a jest would be a profanation, and the awful authority that went with our Lord as from on high, compelling the hearers of his word to cry out that "never man spake like this man." And more still do we wonder, when Mahomet and the Saviour are classed together as religious geniuses and reformers, that those who so contemplate them do not feel the shocking incongruity of placing the serene, self-denying, and spotless life of the one — even if we regard him as but a man — his pure and peaceful teachings, which stopped not at outward acts, but pierced to the root of wickedness in the heart, side by side with the worldly ambition, the violence, the imposture, the shedding of blood, the fierce and exclusive bigotry, and the insatiable licentiousness of the other.

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2. *Old Portraits and Modern Sketches.* By JOHN G. WHITTIER.  
Boston : Ticknor, Reed & Fields. 1850. 12mo. pp. 304.

WE have read this little volume of Mr. Whittier's with great pleasure and instruction. It consists of a series of biographical sketches, several of which were originally published in the

National Era at Washington. There are ten in all, and each of the characters here commemorated was distinguished either by commanding services rendered to the public, or by the possession of high qualities of character, which entitled him to be held in honor among men. The literary execution of the sketches is excellent. Mr. Whittier is well known as a vigorous poet, a philanthropist, somewhat belligerent for a Quaker,—one who thinks boldly, and dares to say what he thinks.

In all these biographies, except the last, we can discern the link of sympathy which binds them to Mr. Whittier's heart. Honest John Bunyan, the persecuted tinker, who wrote the book most read in English next the Bible; Thomas Ellwood, the Quaker friend and reader to Milton, and the suggester of the *Paradise Regained*; James Nayler, the innocent fanatic who stood in the pillory, was branded, whipped, imprisoned, had his tongue bored with hot iron, and died at last, meek, forgiving, and repentant; Andrew Marvell, also a friend of Milton, a republican, a member of Parliament, poor, but deaf to the siren blandishments of power, a witty controversialist and a beautiful poet; John Roberts, whose sturdy sense and homely wit beat down the pride of priests and bishops; Richard Baxter, who argued for toleration to himself, but refused it to others, who vehemently defended the celibacy of the clergy, and wedded a beautiful woman, having protested he would die a bachelor because he did not think he should live to be married;—these are the old portraits, which Mr. Whittier's pencil has so skilfully and vigorously drawn. The other names here celebrated are Samuel Hopkins, the well-known theologian; William Leggett, a political writer of uncommon powers, who died a few years since; N. P. Rogers, an anti-slavery editor, scarcely heard of beyond his peculiar circle of readers and friends, but whose writings, judging from the specimens Mr. Whittier has offered us, give proof of a gentle character, a poetic eye for the beauties of nature, and a pleasant humor—qualities which should have sent his name and influence far beyond the narrow boundaries of a sect or party;—and the last is Robert Dinsmore, the least interesting of them all, though not without strong characteristic traits,—a sturdy son of one of the Irish Presbyterians of Scotch descent, who emigrated to the New World, and settled in the neighborhood of the Merrimack at the beginning of the last century. Dinsmore seems to have combined the racy flavors of the three nationalities to which he belonged; and he is indeed an odd figure in the gallery of portraits that Mr. Whittier has here arranged before us.